

REPORT  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
FOR THE  
Municipal Borough  
OF  
WILTON  
For the year ended 31st December,  
1945.

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SANITARY AND HEALTH OFFICIALS.

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# ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended December, 1945  
on Public Health Matters in the  
Borough of Wilton.

## SECTION A.

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### **General Description of the Borough.**

Wilton is a small old established Borough lying in the south of Wiltshire, having a population of some 2,400. The population varies little from year to year, and the great majority of the inhabitants have been born and bred here.

The character of the town remains as stationary as does the population ; no new industries have been started in recent years, and the only works with any number of employees are the carpet factory and the felt mill. The remainder of the inhabitants are mainly employed in the local shops (Wilton is a small market centre), on the railways, on the roads, or in the City of Salisbury.

In the centre of the town especially many of the houses are old and inconvenient, and very closely crowded together ; and while not being actually slum property fall decidedly below modern housing standards. There is now, and has been for many years, a shortage of good type houses for rental. The following figures give more details.

Population, 2,436.

Acreage, 2,681.

Number of inhabited houses, 764

Number of working class houses, 528.

Number of council houses, 128.

Industries and Trades, Wilton Royal Carpet Factory.  
Wilton Felt Mill.  
Messrs. Brewers Agricultural  
Works.

Rateable Value, £13,776.  
 Product of a Penny Rate £52.  
 Gas Supply, Salisbury Gas Co.  
 Highways, Administered by the County Council.  
 Refuse Removal, by private contract.  
 Sewage Disposal, piped to works outside the Borough.

## **Vital Statistics to December, 1945.**

### ***Births.***

Forty children were born alive in the district : of these twenty-five were male and fifteen were female. There were seven illegitimate births. This is the highest recorded number for many years and equals a percentage of 17, or about one child in six.

The birth-rate was 16.4, a satisfactory figure, as was also the number of still-births which was this year nil.

Live Births—	Total	M	F	} Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population 16.4.
Legitimate	33	20	13	
Illegitimate	7	5	2	
Stillbirths	0	0	0	Rate per 1,000 live and stillbirths 0.
Deaths	35	17	18	Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population 14.3.

### ***General statement on the Health of the Borough.***

It is very satisfactory to report that the general health of the Borough has again this year, as it has for many years, been very good. There has been no epidemic of notifiable infectious disease, and not a single case of diphtheria. There is no excessive or unusual cause of mortality to report during the year. The number of immunised children rose steadily as shown in the table that follows, and was at the end of the year at a very satisfactory level. The great majority of Wilton children are being immunised soon after reaching the age of one year.



On looking at the table of the causes of deaths one can see that most of the deaths occurred in old people from the common causes of heart failure and general breakdown of the cardiac system, and a few from cancer, etc. The mortality amongst young and middle aged was small.

Not a single death occurred from any infectious disease except one case of tuberculosis.

*The following were the causes of death.*

Cancer	...	...	...	3
Intracranial vascular lesions	...	...	...	2
Heart Disease	..	...	...	19
Other Diseases of the Circulatory system	...	...	...	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	1
Pneumonia	...	...	...	1
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	1
Tuberculosis (all forms)	...	...	...	1
Nephritis	...	...	...	1
Other causes	...	...	...	5
Total				<u>35</u>

*Figures for immunisation at the end of 1945.*

Children

born in	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Number								
Immunised	34	29	34	18	18	21	12	17

- It should be noted that—
1. Only children under the Council Scheme were counted.
  2. Only children resident in the Borough were counted
  3. The number of children born each year in Wilton is usually somewhere between thirty-two and thirty-five

The great majority of preschool children will thus be seen to be immunised, as are about 90% of the Junior School and a majority in the Senior School also. We have not within recent years had an epidemic of diphtheria, and now with these excellent figures there is less reason to expect one.

## SECTION B.

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### **General Provision of Health Services for the Borough.**

The Medical Officer spends his whole time in Public Health work, being Medical Officer for the neighbouring rural district of Salisbury and Wilton, as also of Mere and Tisbury R.D.

His qualifications are Bachelor of Science (Honours degree), Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery, Diploma of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, England; Certificate of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, London, etc.

During the year there was a change in Sanitary Inspectors. Mr. David, who had been Sanitary Inspector during the war years, left for another position, and Mr. Cooke took over in November. Mr. Cooke is a fully qualified inspector (M.R.S.I.) and holds the Meat Inspector's certificate. The appointment in Wilton is a whole time one.

Contribution to these two officers' salaries is made under the Public Health Acts.

A change was also made in the Officer in charge of the Infant Welfare and Antenatal Clinics. Dr. Straton, who had been in charge since the opening of the centre over a period of many years, retired, and his duties were taken over by his successor, Dr. Lane. Dr. Straton's abilities and care were reflected in the excellent results so often reported to the Council.



There are two midwives who devote part of their time to the Borough and part to the Rural area. They also act as school nurses. They are responsible to a local committee acting in conjunction with the County Nursing Association.

Home nursing is not yet specially catered for beyond the amount given by the two nurses mentioned above. An attempt was made to set up a service but this unfortunately failed.

### *Laboratory Facilities.*

Examination of swabs, and other bacteriological work is carried out at the Greville Laboratory in Salisbury Infirmary. The laboratory is recognised for the examination of milk by the Ministry of Health. Work here is most satisfactorily and promptly carried out.

### *Legislation in force in the Area.*

There are byelaws with respect to Cleansing of Footways and Pavements, Cleansing of Earth-closets, Privies, Ashpits and Cesspools ; for dealing with nuisances from snow, filth, keeping of animals, slaughterhouses ; and regarding cemetery management, dating from 29th April, 1891.

Building bye-laws were adopted 27th August, 1924.

### *Hospital service available for the Area.*

- (1) *Infectious Fevers.* Joint Districts Isolation Hospital, Old Sarum.
- (2) *General Cases.* General Infirmary, Salisbury.
- (3) *Children.* No special hospital is provided by the Authority or by the County. A convalescent home is available at Marlborough.
- (4) *Maternity.* Beds are available at Salisbury Infirmary.
- (5) *Venereal Disease.* Salisbury Infirmary Clinic.

- (6) *Tuberculosis.* Winsley Sanatorium and Harnwood Hospital take the majority of cases; beds are also to be had through the County Council at Savernake and at Alton, or at Bath Orthopædic Hospital.
- (7) *Chronic Sick.* Provision is arranged for these in Tower House, etc.
- (8) *Orthopædic.* Bath Orthopædic Hospital.
- (9) *Mental Cases.* Special schools outside the County, or other County Institutions through the County Council. There is now more adequate provision within the County boundaries.
- (10) { *Puerperal Fever*  
*Puerperal Pyrexia*  
*Ophthalmia Neonatorum* } Arrangements are made and consultations offered by the County Council.
- (11) *Ear, Nose and Throat cases.* Salisbury Infirmary.

### ***Hospital Service as a whole.***

There are no hospitals or nursing homes in the area itself, and none are necessary, the present arrangements being satisfactory and the area well served. Full advantage is taken of Hospital treatment.

Salisbury Infirmary is equipped to deal with operative cases, and contains an up-to-date pathological laboratory.

There are no maternity or nursing homes in the area.

The maternal mortality is, as it was last year, nil.

### ***Clinics and Treatment Centres.***

(1) *Infant Welfare.* A centre is provided by a committee of ladies supported by voluntary contributions, by the payment of a small fee, and by a subsidy. Antenatal work is also carried out.

(2) *Other Clinics.* There are in Salisbury available for and used by this district a Tuberculosis Dispensary, Venereal Diseases Clinic, and an Orthopædic Centre, provided by the County Council.

There is no school clinic for the district, neither are there day nurseries or light clinics.

## SECTION C.

**Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.***Water Supply.*

The source of supply is a shallow well. Samples taken over a long number of years have almost invariably been satisfactory, but being a shallow well supply constant care is taken to guard against possible sources of pollution, and attention was recently paid to the condition of the lining. The water is treated with "Chloramine." Samples are taken prior to treatment as an additional safeguard. A copy of a recent report is given.

*Report on Bacteriological Examination of Water.*

Water sample received on 4th December, 1945, from Wilton Waterworks before treatment rising main.

*1.—Bacteriological Count.*

Total colonies growing on agar at 37C in 48 hours :—  
3 per 1m.1 of water

*2 —B. Coli Counts at 37C in 48 hours and 44C in 48 hours.*

Quantity of water	Acid and gas from lactose									
	at 37C					at 44C				
Five tubes of 10m.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Five tubes of 1m.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

As a result of calculation from above :—

- (1) Number of Coli Aerogenes per 100m.1 growing at 37C—Nil.
- (2) Number of Faecal types of B.Coli per 100m.1 at 44C—Nil.

*Opinion.*

Bacteriological examination shows no evidence whatsoever of harmful pollution.



### *Further notes on the Water Supply.*

The present source and plant is capable of supplying a much greater population than that of Wilton itself and the Council are willing to sell water outside their own area. That they are in a position to do so is proved by the enormous quantity supplied to the army during war-time. As shown above the quality of the water is good. It is hard water (Total hardness 36.0, Temporary hardness 29.0, Permanent hardness 7.0) there is thus no fear of plumbosolvent action. The Borough has of course a piped supply throughout, with up-to-date pumps and a satisfactory reservoir. Recently a small extension was made to supply a pair of cottages in the rural area.

### *Pollution of Rivers and Streams.*

During the year the sanitary inspector investigated several complaints under the above head. There is as a rule little pollution by trade waste, etc., but from time to time trouble arises through tins, etc., being deposited in the river. The Avon and Stour Catchment Board are the Authority concerned with the upkeep.

### *Closet Accommodation.*

The water carriage system is in operation in nearly all the closets in Wilton, but there are still a few cases where it is impossible to connect to the sewer.

### *Public Cleansing and Refuse Removal.*

The cleansing and repair of public highways and footpaths is carried out by the County Council under contract. On the whole this work is done satisfactorily, although minor causes of complaint did arise during the year. Refuse removal is undertaken by a private contractor. During the year this service was run satisfactorily under difficulties, the only serious cause of complaint being the type of vehicle used. The contractor has however now been able to purchase a new and proper vehicle for the purpose and at present there is no complaint with the service.

### *Inspection of Meat and Foods.*

Since the introduction by the Ministry of Food of the policy of centralised slaughter there has been no slaughter of animals for food in the Borough. Meat and food in retailers' shops, however, is still subject to inspection, and during the year the usual amount of blown tins, etc., were condemned.

### *Cowsheds and Dairies.*

The usual routine inspections were carried out. Samples are now no longer taken for the County Council under the Special Designations Scheme as was the case during the war, the County Council now being able to carry it out themselves. The dairies and cowsheds are on the whole satisfactory.

### *Factories and Workshops.*

No cause for action in connection with the above arose.

### *Other sanitary work.*

The usual number of complaints, nuisances, etc., were taken up and gone into, but no special comment is called for.

## **Housing.**

There is a great dearth of houses in Wilton, and a long waiting list for such as from time to time become vacant. The type which is needed is not only the council house type (of which some two hundred would not be too many) but also small houses for rental privately to those citizens who do not require or desire to live in a council house; unfortunately it would appear to be extremely unlikely that any builder will speculate on these at the present time or in the near future. The council are therefore left to supply the necessary houses themselves. During the

war there was in Wilton, as elsewhere, serious overcrowding, even in the council houses themselves. This is not yet wholly abated.

There are two types of prospective tenant for any council house built: firstly the old Wilton inhabitant living in unsuitable surroundings (and there are many of these), who has had his name on the waiting list for years; and the young people waiting to be married, or already married and living with their parents until such time as they can set up their own establishment; this class is also numerous, and likewise deserve consideration as they will be the new Wilton.

The council in the past has built a considerable number of council houses, and fully realising the present acute shortage, have drawn out a scheme for one hundred others of the permanent type. One has to report, however, that through circumstances beyond the control of the council not a single new additional house was built or being built at the end of the year by the council, by private enterprise, or otherwise.

During the year the council did try to secure some army huts of better type the possession of which would have at least temporarily mitigated some of the shortage, but here again they had no success.

At the time of writing there are building ten prefabricated houses. Allocation of these is very difficult.

### *Condition of the present council houses.*

These were all inspected by the previous sanitary inspector and faults therein mentioned in his special report to the council. Many of the houses are badly in need of painting, especially on the exterior. Tenders were got for this work some time ago but were, perhaps naturally, extremely high, consequently the painting was postponed, and meantime the condition gets steadily worse. The houses are on the whole well kept internally and compare very favourably with council houses elsewhere. During the year there was no complaint of infestation with fleas, bed bugs or other insect pest.



**SECTION F.**  

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**Prevalence of and Control over  
Infectious Disease.**  

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Notifiable disease has again been rare in the Borough. There were four cases of scarlet fever and no cases of diphtheria. There were no "secondary" cases and no return cases. This remarkable freedom from infectious disease has been noticeable for the last fifteen years, and is in my opinion due to prompt diagnosis and insistence on proper isolation. Disinfection is carried out after every case of scarlet fever or diphtheria. It is felt that apart from any good disinfection may do, it helps the Public to realise that diphtheria especially is not a disease with which to trifle. There are no known diphtheria carriers in the Borough; cases are almost invariably traced to other districts. None of the scarlet fever cases were complicated or associated with toxic symptoms. There was no outbreak of streptococcal sore throat, and no cases of puerperal fever, a disease which is almost unknown in the Borough. There were no cases of malaria or dysentery, so that nothing need be said of the 1927 Regulations. Pneumonia cases in bad or overcrowded surroundings may receive treatment if required in the Isolation Hospital, but this was not found necessary during the past year.

Demand on accommodation at the Joint Districts Isolation Hospital (which Wilton Borough, Salisbury City and neighbouring districts run) necessarily varies from time to time, but to date no cases of infectious disease which ought to have been admitted has ever been kept at home on account of lack of accommodation. The hospital is a good one and meets the needs of this area admirably. The Council are quite prepared to admit cases of measles or whooping cough as and when required, but it was not found necessary in 1945.

As the incidence of scarlet fever is so slight the question of home isolation versus hospital treatment is not an acute one, but each case is treated on merit.

School intimations of disease were again found helpful.

Details of Artificial Immunisation against diphtheria are given elsewhere.

Notifiable diseases (other than tuberculoses) during the year 1945 :—

Disease	Number of cases	Admitted to Isolation Hospital	Deaths
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	4	4	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0
Acute Pneumonia	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	0	0	0
Erysipelas	1	0	0
Infantile Paralysis	0	0	0
Dysentery	1	1	0

### *Prevention of Blindness and Tuberculosis.*

No action was taken under section 66 of the P.H.A. 1925, nor under the Regulations governing the employment of persons suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis in the milk trade, nor under section 62 of the same Act.

# TUBERCULOSIS

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New cases and mortality during 1945.

Age Period	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0			1					
1								
5								
10								
15								
20					1			
25		1						
35								
45	1							
55								
65 & upwards								
Totals	1	1			1			

Reminders where necessary are sent but for some years past this has been unnecessary, notifications are invariably sent in promptly. There were no deaths of unnotified tuberculous cases

G. NAPIER.





